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Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council

Thematic cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels

Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities

Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions considered the report of the Secretary-General on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/70/348/Add.9). The report contains the proposed additional resource requirements for the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team pursuant to resolutions 1526 (2004) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities for 2016 and the proposed resource requirements for 2016 for the implementation of Council resolution 2231 (2015). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses provided on 3 March 2016.

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II. Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

2. In paragraphs 1 to 5 of his report, the Secretary-General provides information on the background, mandate and objectives of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. As indicated, in its resolution 2253 (2015), the Security Council, among other things:

(a) Expanded the mandate of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities and decided that it would thenceforth be known as the "Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities", and that the Committee's sanctions list would thenceforth be known as the "ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List" (resolution 2253 (2015), para. 1);

(b) Called for up to two new experts on the Monitoring Team, together with the additional administrative and analytical support resources needed to increase its capacity and strengthen its ability to analyse ISIL (Da'esh) financing, radicalization and recruitment, and attack planning activities, as well as support the resulting increased activities of the sanctions committee by the Secretariat (ibid., para. 90);

(c) Directed the Secretariat, with the assistance of the Monitoring Team, to build and maintain the data model approved by the sanctions committee, with a view to its completion by June 2017, and requested the Secretary-General to provide additional resources in that regard (ibid., para. 48);

(d) Expanded the functions and tasks of the Ombudsperson to cover ISIL (Da'esh) (ibid., para. 54 and annex II).

3. The mandated tasks of the Monitoring Team are set out in paragraph 2 of the report of the Secretary-General. The report also provides information on cooperation with other entities (paras. 6-8) and sets out the revised planning assumptions for 2016 (paras. 9-16).

4. The Secretary-General indicates that the expansion of the mandate of the Monitoring Team has increased the activities of the Monitoring Team, in particular with regard to ISIL (Da'esh), in addition to the related workload in terms of substantive, information systems and administrative support. The expected areas of increased activity entailing the need for Secretariat support include meeting support; updating of the list database; the issuing and updating of INTERPOL-United Nations Security Council Special Notices for listed names; the issuing of notes verbales to Member States and press releases; the preparation and dispatch of notification letters to relevant States; the upkeep of the sanctions committees' websites; the drafting of tables of recommendations based on Monitoring Team reports; and the drafting of the sanctions committees' position papers (para. 13). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with additional information on the projected increase in outputs for the Monitoring Team (see annex).

5. The Advisory Committee was informed that, since the establishment of the sanctions committee under resolution 1267 (1999) in 1999 and the Monitoring Team in 2004, their mandates had been steadily expanded by the Security Council. In 2011, that sanctions committee had been split into two separate committees, one focused on Al-Qaida globally and the other on the Taliban and its associates in

Afghanistan, and the Security Council Affairs Division of the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat had been tasked to provide support to both committees and to the Monitoring Team. In 2014 and 2015, the Council had further expanded the mandates in a series of resolutions focusing on regional situations in the Syrian Arab Republic, Libya and the rest of Africa,[1] and to include further specific iterations of the sanctions measures to better target the threat of foreign terrorist fighters and terrorist links with transnational organized crime and natural resources, in particular oil and antiques trafficking from the Syrian Arab Republic.[2] Lastly, in December 2015, the Council had again expanded those mandates to better address the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh).[3] The Advisory Committee was further informed that support was currently being provided by three staff (1 P-5, 1 P-2, 1 General Service (Other level)) from within the existing staff of the Division.

Proposed additional resource requirements

6. The proposed additional requirements for 2016 are estimated at $1,968,300 (net of staff assessment), to provide for 10 additional positions (3 P-4, 3 P-3, 4 General Service) to provide substantive and administrative support to the sanctions committee, the Monitoring Team and the Office of the Ombudsperson ($852,400); expert fees ($326,000) for the two additional experts; expert travel ($145,300) to cover the travel of the experts and the Ombudsperson; official travel of staff ($99,900); facilities and infrastructure ($229,600); communications ($5,700); information technology services ($306,400); and other supplies and services ($3,000).

7. The proposed 10 additional positions would be based in New York to provide the following functions:

Support to the sanctions committee

(a) One Political Affairs Officer (P-4) would be responsible for the organization of Secretariat services to the sanctions committee;

(b) One Political Affairs Officer (P-3) would assist in the organization of those services;

(c) One Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) would support the Political Affairs Officers in the organization of those services and ensure the distribution of procedural notes for the Chair of the sanctions committee;

Support to the Monitoring Team

(d) Two Political Affairs Officers (1 P-4, 1 P-3) would provide substantive support with regard to mandated tasks relating to ISIL (Da'esh);

(e) One Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) would be responsible for the organization of Secretariat services;

Development and maintenance of the enhanced data model

(f) One Political Affairs Officer (P-4) would oversee the development, management and substantive maintenance of an enhanced data model for the ISIL

[1] Resolutions 2170 (2014) (Syrian Arab Republic), 2195 (2014) (Africa) and 2214 (2015) (Libya).
[2] Resolutions 2178 (2014) (foreign terrorist fighters) and 2199 (2015) (natural resources).
[3] Resolution 2253 (2015).

(Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List and the Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List, as required under paragraph 48 of Security Council resolution 2253 (2015);

(g) One Information Systems Officer (P-3) would be responsible for developing detailed system and other functional specifications and user documentation for the enhanced data model;

(h) One Information Systems Assistant (General Service (Other level)) would be responsible for providing basic technical support for relevant hardware and software systems applications, and installing application systems, software and hardware according to specifications;

(i) One Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) would enter electronic data, for implementing updates and generating, reviewing and publishing the two sanctions lists.

8. A staffing complement of 12 positions (1 P-5, 2 P-4, 3 P-3, 6 General Service (Other level)) approved in 2015 provides substantive and administrative support to the Monitoring Team and the Office of the Ombudsperson. Until the adoption of resolution 2253 (2015), the Monitoring Team comprised nine experts (see A/70/348/Add.9, para. 2). The Secretary-General proposes a total of 22 positions (1 P-5, 5 P-4, 6 P-3, 10 General Service (Other level)) to support the Monitoring Team, which will, pursuant to paragraph 90 of the resolution, comprise 11 experts. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the existing 12 positions comprised 2 positions (1 P-4, 1 General Service (Other level)) in support of the Office of the Ombudsperson and 10 (1 P-5, 1 P-4, 3 P-3, 5 General Service (Other level)) in support of the Monitoring Team.

9. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that the functions of the additional position of Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) proposed in support of the Monitoring Team (see para. 7 (e) above) can be provided from within existing capacity and therefore recommends against its approval by the General Assembly. Any related non-post resources should be adjusted accordingly. The Committee recommends the approval of the remaining proposals for post and non-post resources.**

Enhanced data model

10. In paragraph 14 of his report, the Secretary-General refers to the enhanced data model as a complex multi-year information technology development project. Upon request for additional clarification regarding the project, the Advisory Committee was informed that the enhanced data model was intended to facilitate better sanctions implementation by Member States, the private sector and other relevant international and regional organizations and would introduce significant improvements to the current model in use by all sanctions committees. The improvements included greater flexibility by enabling the addition of new classes of data and extensive use of data reference tables; the entry of structured rather than free-form data for elements such as dates, locations, identities, aliases and events, thereby reducing ambiguity and subjective interpretation of sanctions data; and the use of improved identity search technology and international naming conventions. The Committee was also informed that, while the concept of the enhanced data model had been adopted by the sanctions committee, the model itself and the related

application needed to be developed on the basis of extensive consultations, taking into account the current system. The system to be developed would also be subject to rigorous testing before the migration of data from the current database and the dissemination of information. The Committee was further informed that, once completed, the enhanced data model would be implemented for all sanctions committees. **The Advisory Committee expects that the model and related system will be designed and developed in a manner that ensures that the same system can be reused for all sanctions committees without duplication of effort, in the most cost-effective manner possible.**

11. With regard to the proposed resource requirements, the Advisory Committee notes that, in addition to the proposed staffing of four positions (see paras. 7 (f)-7 (i) above), the Secretary-General is proposing a provision of $280,000 under information technology to cover the development of the enhanced data model. Upon request for a breakdown of that amount, the Committee was informed that it comprised software development service fees for two software developers for nine work-months each ($240,000), a one-time software licence fee ($10,000) and requirements for servers and data storage ($30,000).

12. The Advisory Committee was informed that the proposed four additional staff members (1 P-4, 1 P-3 and 2 General Service (Other level)) would be responsible for the development and maintenance of the enhanced data model. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that there is a need to establish a detailed project plan setting out the resources required by year and skill set during each phase of the project, together with plans for the decommissioning of existing systems to be replaced by the new system and release of related resources. In this regard, the Committee questions the continued requirement for four positions for the maintenance and operation of the system after the completion of the development and roll-out phases, in particular for positions such as Information Systems Officer and Information Systems Assistant. Accordingly, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to keep the project under review and to present in the next budget submission information on the various phases of the project, differentiating between the post and non-post resources required during each phase and for the operation of the system, and to adjust the proposals for resource requirements as appropriate.**

13. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the project plan was in line with the United Nations information and communications technology strategy. With regard to the procurement and development of the application, the Committee was informed that, on the basis of an initial assessment by the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the Secretariat, software developers would be sourced from among the Office's existing service providers with such expertise. Furthermore, systems contracts had already been put in place for all software required for the project, and licences for the required products would be allocated to the Department of Political Affairs by the Office.

14. In this regard, the Advisory Committee recalls that one of the key objectives of the information and communications technology strategy is to reduce the high level of fragmentation of application development across the Secretariat, and that enterprise application centres have been established in New York, Vienna and Bangkok to address the issue (see A/70/364 and Corr.1 and A/70/7/Add.18). **The Advisory**

Committee stresses the need to ensure that the acquisition, development and maintenance of any new systems or applications are fully aligned with the information and communications technology strategy, that the systems do not duplicate or overlap with existing systems or ongoing projects and that they are approved in compliance with the relevant internal procedures and standards. The Committee expects the Secretary-General to provide assurances to the General Assembly in this regard in the context of the next budget submission.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015)

15. Information on the background, mandate and objective with regard to the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) on the Iranian nuclear issue is given in paragraphs 21 to 27 of the report of the Secretary-General.

16. As indicated, in that resolution the Security Council endorsed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear issue, agreed upon on 14 July 2015, which included the establishment of a joint commission. The Council also decided to undertake directly tasks related to the implementation of the resolution, including tasks specified in annex B to the resolution. The practical arrangements and procedures for the Council to undertake those tasks, in particular with regard to the restrictions specified in annex B, were set forth in a note by the President of the Council dated 16 January 2016 (S/2016/44), in which the Secretary-General was requested to report to the Council every six months on implementation. To facilitate its work under the resolution, the Council will annually select one of its members to act as a facilitator for the functions specified in the note. In the note, the Council also requested the Security Council Affairs Division to act as a point of contact in the Secretariat and support the work of the Council and its facilitator.

17. In this regard, the Advisory Committee was informed that the three key functions to be performed by the Secretariat were to support the work of the Security Council and its facilitator as they directly undertook all tasks relating to the implementation of the resolution; to receive, circulate, transmit and track proposals for nuclear and dual-use-related transfers to the Islamic Republic of Iran submitted to the Council through a procurement channel process established under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; and to monitor the implementation of the restrictive measures imposed under the resolution and present relevant findings and recommendations in biannual reports to the Council. The Committee was also informed that the Security Council Affairs Division had not previously been called upon to support the work of the Council in a similar manner, and would have to adapt its current procedures.

18. The Advisory Committee was informed that the number of yearly proposals estimated to be submitted through the procurement channel could range from several hundred to several thousands. For 2016, however, the Secretariat had adopted a conservative approach and estimated that no more than 180 proposals would be submitted.

Proposed resource requirements

19. The proposed requirements for 2016 are estimated at $1,342,900 (net of staff assessment) to provide for 11 positions (1 P-5, 5 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 General Service (Other level)) for substantive and administrative support ($961,900); the travel of

representatives ($14,200); the official travel of staff ($111,900); facilities and infrastructure ($184,000); communications ($9,600); information technology services ($52,300); and other supplies and services ($9,000).

20. The proposed 11 positions would be based in New York to provide the following functions:

(a) One Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5) would be responsible for directing the work of the team providing technical, procedural and administrative support to the Security Council and the facilitator in undertaking the tasks relating to the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015);

(b) One Political Affairs Officer (P-4) would be responsible for the procedural and administrative support provided to the Security Council and the facilitator in its implementation of the resolution, in particular the work on the procurement channel;

(c) Four Political Affairs Officers (P-4) would assist the Security Council in monitoring the implementation of the resolution in the technical areas of nuclear-related restrictions (which would last up to 10 years), ballistic missile-related restrictions (which would last up to eight years), arms-related restrictions (which would last up to five years) and financial measures, including an asset freeze (which would last up to eight years) and travel bans (which would last up to five years). They would present relevant findings and recommendations in the biannual reports of the Secretary-General;

(d) One Political Affairs Officer (P-3) would liaise with the facilitator in organizing and supporting informal meetings of the Security Council and in managing all incoming and outgoing communications relating to the implementation of the resolution, in addition to assisting the facilitator in corresponding with Member States on behalf of the Council;

(e) One Coordination Officer (P-3) would be responsible for developing and maintaining systems to track the proposals for nuclear-related transfers or activities submitted to the Security Council through the procurement channel and for processing them in accordance with the procedures and timelines specified in the resolution;

(f) One Meeting Services Assistant (General Service (Other level)) would assist the team in providing procedural and administrative support to the Security Council and the facilitator, including making all arrangements necessary for informal meetings of the Council, open briefings with Member States and outreach activities;

(g) One Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) would assist in processing the proposals for nuclear-related transfers or activities submitted to the Security Council through the procurement channel. She or he would sort, consolidate and enter data in relevant information management tools and draft related official correspondence and other communications;

(h) One Administrative Assistant (General Service (Other level)) would provide administrative support to the team, including preparing and processing administrative requests and documents relating to the travel of the facilitator and members of the team and undertaking other administrative duties.

21. **The Advisory Committee recommends the approval of the proposals of the Secretary-General for the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).**

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

22. **The action requested of the General Assembly is set out in paragraph 40 of the report of the Secretary-General. Taking into account its recommendation in paragraph 9 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Assembly:**

(a) Take note of the report of the Secretary-General;

(b) Approve additional resources in the total amount of $3,228,100 net ($3,485,300 gross), for:

(i) The Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team ($1,885,200 net ($1,998,000 gross));

(ii) The implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) ($1,342,900 net ($1,487,300 gross));

(c) Authorize the use for the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) of the projected unspent balance in the amount of $2,317,600 (net of staff assessment) following the termination of the Panel of Experts on the Islamic Republic of Iran;

(d) Approve a charge totalling $910,500 (net of staff assessment) against the provision for special political missions appropriated under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017.

Annex

Projected increase in outputs for the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team

	Current	*Projected increase*	*Total projected*
Comprehensive reports to the committees	3	3	6
Country visit reports	20	15	35
Reports on the participation of the Monitoring Team in meetings of international organizations and other meetings	12	6	18
Recommendations to the committees and to the Security Council on actions aimed at promoting or modifying the sanctions regime	20	45	65
Narrative summaries of reasons for listing names on relevant sanctions lists	20	160	180
Proposals for revision of the documents on the committees' websites	14	41	55
Presentations to the committees on the results of country visits	20	15	35
Cooperation projects to broaden engagement with international, regional and subregional organizations on matters pertinent to the work of the relevant committees	9	6	15
Updated information packages for Member States on the sanctions regimes, the sanctions measures and the work and procedures of the committees	2	10	12
Regional meetings for security and intelligence services on the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida threat and the implementation of the sanctions regime	2	1	3
Letters to States and relevant bodies seeking in-depth information on delisting petitions received	100	20	120
Reports to the Security Council	2	0	2
Communications to petitioners and listed persons and entities	80	20	100
Comprehensive case reports in relation to delisting petitions	30	0	30

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Progress on the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered an advance version of the report of the Secretary-General on progress on the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters (A/70/708). During its consideration of the report, the Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification, concluding with written responses received on 7 March 2016.

2. The report of the Secretary-General is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/274 A (section VII), in which the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to continue to implement the planned activities as outlined in his previous report (A/69/749) and to review the costs of implementation of the project, including through reviewing reductions, to the maximum extent possible, in the personal information technology package, reducing new furniture requirements through the reuse of existing furniture and limiting light construction work. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to assess the impact of the flexible workplace pilot on productivity and reflect reliable qualitative and quantitative benefit indicators and other factors for the improvement of overall productivity and staff well-being. In the same resolution, the Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to seek complementarities between flexible workplace strategies and flexible working arrangements.

II. Progress in the implementation of a flexible workplace

3. The Secretary-General provides an update on the status of implementation of flexible workplace strategies since the issuance of his previous report on the comprehensive business case for the application of such strategies (A/69/749). In

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his report, the Secretary-General provides an account of the activities implemented in 2015, and, based on the experience gained from the initial stage of the project implementation, presents a revised business case for the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters (ibid., summary and paras. 6-18), which inter alia envisions a deeper engagement process with the departments and offices at Headquarters, increased variety of work space types, revised project sequence and schedule, a revised real estate plan, and revised project cost estimates. The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations on the Secretary-General's proposals are provided in the paragraphs below.

A. Pilot programme and assessment of departmental requirements

Pilot programme

4. The Advisory Committee recalls that to test the application of a flexible workplace in a United Nations working environment, the Secretary-General had implemented a pilot programme on part of the 18th floor and the 19th floor of the Secretariat Building, involving 128 staff from the Strategic Planning and Staffing Division of the Office of Human Resources Management, who moved into the reconfigured flexible space during the period from October to December 2014 (see A/69/810, para. 7, and A/69/749, para. 29). In his current report, the Secretary-General indicates that the pilot ended in January 2016 with the move of the occupants of the pilot space to temporary space. According to the Secretary-General, the feedback received from the pilot participants demonstrated the need for further changes in the workspace provided, which include more and better personal storage, more normal-height seating in working lounges, and replacement of sofa seating with booth-style spaces (A/70/708, para. 26). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the feedback also demonstrated that specific space configurations provided for in the pilot space required further review and adjustments.

5. The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the implementation of the pilot involved an expenditure of $1,230,900, comprising the cost of consultant ($18,000), development of pilot space ($1,017,897) and information technology requirements ($195,003).

6. **The Advisory Committee is of the view that outcomes of pilot programmes should be analysed in greater detail to derive lessons learned that are crucial to apply while moving forward with change initiatives. The Committee expects that the Secretary-General will provide to the General Assembly such information on the pilot programme undertaken in respect of the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters at the time of its consideration of his current proposal on this subject.**

Assessment of departmental requirements

7. The Secretary-General explains the process followed to assess the departmental requirements for determining the extent of customization of workspaces (ibid., paras. 19-25). According to the Secretary-General, the process of engagement with the department heads started in June 2015 with the objective to explain the main aspects and rationale of the flexible workplace project and to identify specific departmental requirements. During the engagement process, the

project team conducted an in-depth needs assessment for each floor, which were converted into floor design options that formed the basis of further discussions and a final agreement on the required floor design (ibid., paras. 23-24). The interactions with the departments demonstrated a need for a greater customization of space than initially anticipated (ibid., para. 16). The Secretary-General also indicates that the discussions with the department heads were followed by articles published on the Secretariat's intranet, mainly addressing staff members, who expressed anxiety and concerns regarding changes that the flexible workplace will bring to their overall operational environment. According to the Secretary-General, this further demonstrated the need for a more intense change management and engagement process involving the staff members (ibid., paras. 17-18).

8. **The Advisory Committee notes that establishing the departmental requirements related to workspace by the project team in collaboration with the department's representatives is fundamental for defining the project's scope and estimating a realistic timeframe and the related resource requirements for the project's implementation. The Committee trusts that in doing so, staff needs and well-being will continue to be given full consideration.**

B. Space types

9. Taking into account the feedback received from the pilot-participants and other staff members during the assessment of departmental requirements, the Secretary-General proposes an increased variety of workspace types in his current proposal. A total of nine space types along with other refinements are proposed, compared with the six space types presented in his previous report on this subject (ibid., paras. 28-36).

C. Project phases and impact on productivity

Project phases

10. The Secretary-General provides the scope and timeframe for the first and second phases of the project, and indicates that the project team is in discussion with other departments and offices to develop plans for the subsequent phases. The first phase involves the 13th, 18th and 19th floors of the Secretariat Building, comprising the Office of Information and Communications Technology, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of Human Resources Management. The Secretary-General indicates that all occupants of those floors moved to a temporary flexible workplace environment in early January 2016 and are scheduled to move back to reconfigured flexible space on their respective floors in late March. The second phase of the project is planned to be implemented during the period from April to June 2016 and involves the 20th, 21st and 32nd floors, comprising the Office of Central Support Services, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (ibid., paras. 13-15 and 62).

11. **The Advisory Committee, noting that the Secretary-General provides implementation plans only for the first and second phases of the project that extend until June 2016, considers it essential to establish such plans in respect of the remaining phases of the project. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide in his next progress report a detailed implementation plan for the full scope of the project which can serve as a reliable basis for estimating the corresponding resource requirement and the timeframe.**

Impact on productivity and staff well-being

12. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 68/247 B, noted that flexible workplace strategies in the United Nations should be aimed at improving the overall productivity and efficiency of the Organization, as well as the staff workplace environment. The Advisory Committee further recalls that in its previous report on this subject, it recognized the difficulty in measuring productivity across the different functions performed in the Organization, but nonetheless considered that factors for the improvement of overall productivity should be taken into account in the implementation of a flexible workplace. The Committee had also requested the Secretary-General to provide this information in his next report on a flexible workplace (see A/69/810, para. 14).

13. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/274 A, requested the Secretary-General to assess the impact of the flexible workplace pilot on productivity and reflect reliable qualitative and quantitative benefit indicators and other factors for the improvement of overall productivity and staff well-being. The Secretary-General indicates that to assess the impact of flexible workplace on productivity, a workplace performance index (WPI) was developed by the consultancy firm contracted to assist with the project. Details about the WPI and its use are provided in paragraphs 45 to 47 of the Secretary-General's report. According to the Secretary-General, the WPI, inter alia, measures the effectiveness of space provided to the staff members and their impression of the workplace and work environment. In this connection, the Secretary-General indicates that staff members participating in the first phase of the flexible workplace project were asked to complete the WPI in December 2015, prior to moving into flexible workplace. Later, after the staff members have worked in the new space for several months, they will be asked to complete the WPI again. The Secretary-General further indicates that responses to the WPI will be analysed and reported as part of his next progress report.

14. The Secretary-General also indicates that the impact of the flexible workplace on staff well-being was measured, using sick leave as a proxy indicator for a small sample of the pilot population consisting of 58 staff members.[1] In this regard, the Secretary-General indicates that as the project progresses, further data will be analysed, and updated information will be provided in his next progress report (ibid., para. 50).

15. Upon enquiry as to how factors for the improvement of overall productivity would be identified and analysed, the Advisory Committee was informed that a primary objective of the project is to provide reconfigured floors, using the flexible workplace space types tailored to address the specific work needs of the

[1] For these staff members of the pilot population, sick leave information was available for the pilot period and for a comparable period in the previous year.

departments that would occupy those floors. The Committee was further informed that the project team, in addition to interacting with the departments and offices to identify the work-related space requirements of staff, will also identify those features of their current workplace that require improvements to support their work-related needs. According to the Secretary-General, the new flexible workplace will provide all staff with more enclosed spaces as well as with designated quiet zones for specific work-related requirements. The Committee was also informed that the Secretariat expected these measures to have a positive impact on staff productivity.

16. **The Advisory Committee notes that an assessment of the impact of a flexible workplace on overall productivity and staff well-being has not yet been finalized and reiterates the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/274 A in this regard. The Committee expects that the required assessment will be completed, and its results along with the benefit indicators and other relevant factors, as required by the Assembly, will be reflected in the next report of the Secretary-General.**

D. Revised real estate plans

17. The Secretary-General provides information in respect of his revised real estate plans in paragraphs 58 to 60 of his report. The Advisory Committee recalls that in his previous report, the Secretary-General had indicated that the Secretariat, FF, DC-1, DC-2, Innovation, and the UNITAR buildings had been considered for possible implementation of a flexible workplace. In respect of the main considerations for each building, the Secretary-General had indicated that whereas the Secretariat and the FF buildings had been found to be suitable for the implementation of a flexible workplace, the DC-1, DC-2 and Innovation buildings were found not suitable for consideration, and the UNITAR building was found to already have characteristics of a flexible workplace (see A/69/749, paras. 13-14).

18. The Advisory Committee further recalls that the Secretary-General had indicated that after a detailed consideration of the current United Nations Headquarters real estate portfolio and the space efficiencies that could be achieved through implementation of a flexible workplace, it had been determined that leases in three buildings could be discontinued, by the time their current leases expired: the Daily News Building, at 220 East 42nd Street (April 2017), the Albano Building, at 305 East 46th Street (January 2018), and the UNFCU building, at Court Square in Long Island City (February 2018) (see A/69/749, para. 65).

19. In his current proposal, the Secretary-General indicates that after taking into account several factors, including the feedback received from the engagement with departments and staff at large and the consideration given to the comparative cost of leases, it became clear that the real estate plans reflected in the previous business case required re-evaluation and adjustments (ibid., paras. 55-58). The current proposal of the Secretary-General is based on the assumption that leases for two buildings in Manhattan, namely, the Daily News Building and the Innovation Building will be discontinued at the end of April 2017 and September 2018 respectively. According to the Secretary-General, the Daily News Building accommodates 125 staff members and the Innovation Building, 616 (ibid., paras. 55 and 60). Upon request, the present status of the leases of commercial property at the United Nations Headquarters as well as the envisaged status of such leases, should

the flexible workplace project be implemented, was provided to the Advisory Committee and is included in the annex to the present report.

20. In respect of the occupancy of the Albano Building, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that currently 660 staff members of the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management are located in the building, and that the Department had expressed a preference to continue to occupy the building until a permanent solution to the accommodation needs of the Secretariat could be found. The Committee was also informed that the Secretariat envisaged the current lease for the Albano Building, due to expire at the end of January 2018, to be extended for two years. At the time of the subsequent extension of the lease, a greater clarity was expected on the long-term accommodation needs for Headquarters, which would facilitate a decision on the future use of Albano Building.

21. In respect of the UNFCU building, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that currently 190 staff members are located in the building, and an additional 100 staff is anticipated to move to that location as the project progresses. Furthermore, the Secretary-General indicates that the cost of leasing the building is the lowest in the current real estate portfolio, and it was therefore considered prudent to retain that leased space (ibid., para. 58). The Secretary-General further indicates that this is in compliance with the endorsement of the Committee's conclusions and recommendations on long-term accommodation needs at United Nations Headquarters by the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/248 (ibid., para. 58).

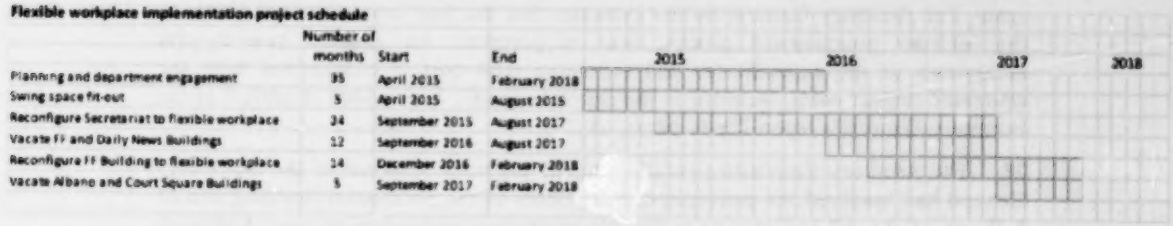
22. The Advisory Committee recalls that in that context, it had noted that a determination of the Organization's future space requirements is influenced by a number of concurrent business transformation projects, including the enterprise resource planning system (Umoja), the global service delivery model, and the information and communications technology (ICT) strategy. The Committee had also considered that a significant number of uncertainties needed to be addressed with respect to the impact of the Organization's business transformation initiatives on the number of staff and their physical space requirements in New York (see A/70/7/Add.22, paras. 11 and 13; see also para. 42 below). The Advisory Committee will provide its comments and recommendations on the Organization's global property management in its forthcoming report on Strategic Capital Review (A/70/7/Add.43).

23. The Advisory Committee discusses the impact of the Secretary-General's revised real estate plans on the anticipated reduction in long-term commercial rental costs in paragraphs 34 to 36 below.

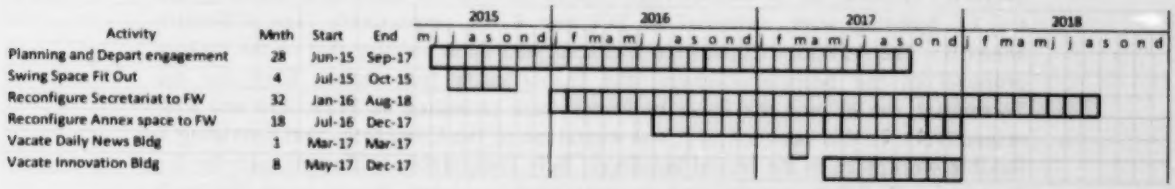
E. Revised project implementation schedule

24. Along with his revised real estate plans, the Secretary-General also provides a revised project implementation schedule (ibid., para. 64). The implementation schedules provided in the previous and the current reports are reproduced below.

Flexible Workplace Project implementation schedule (A/69/749)


Flexible workplace implementation project schedule
Number of months
Start
End
2015
2016
2017
2018
Planning and department engagement 35 April 2015 February 2018
Swing space fit-out 5 April 2015 August 2015
Reconfigure Secretariat to flexible workplace 24 September 2015 August 2017
Vacate FF and Daily News Buildings 12 September 2016 August 2017
Reconfigure FF Building to flexible workplace 14 December 2016 February 2018
Vacate Albano and Court Square Buildings 5 September 2017 February 2018

Flexible Workplace Project implementation schedule (A/70/708)


Activity
Mnth
Start
End
2015
2016
2017
2018
m j j a s o n d j f m a m j j a s o n d j f m a m j j a s o n d j f m a m j j a s o n d
Planning and Depart engagement 28 Jun-15 Sep-17
Swing Space Fit Out 4 Jul-15 Oct-15
Reconfigure Secretariat to FW 32 Jan-16 Aug-18
Reconfigure Annex space to FW 18 Jul-16 Dec-17
Vacate Daily News Bldg 1 Mar-17 Mar-17
Vacate Innovation Bldg 8 May-17 Dec-17

25. **The Advisory Committee considers that revisions in the project implementation schedule impact the overall resource projections and the related timeframes. The Committee therefore emphasizes the need to establish a realistic implementation schedule, taking into account all the project deliverables, and once established, to adhere to the schedule.**

III. Expenditure, revised estimated cost, anticipated reduction in long-term commercial rental costs and proposed funding

Expenditure incurred in 2015

26. The Secretary-General indicates that a total expenditure of $5,220,866 was incurred for the project's implementation in 2015. A breakdown of the expenditure by activity is provided in table 2, and by object of expenditure, in table 3 of the Secretary-General's report. It is further indicated that in 2015, the project expenditure was approximately $600,000 lower than anticipated, as the implementation started later than planned (ibid., para. 67).

Revised estimated costs

27. The Secretary-General indicates that the revised estimated costs for the project's implementation, involves the reconfiguration of 26 floors of the Secretariat Building, 3 floors of the FF building and 5 floors of the DC-1 building. The revised costs are estimated in the amount of $65.7 million, representing an increase of $16.1 million compared with the amount presented in his previous report (ibid., paras. 69-70). According to the Secretary-General, a revision of construction costs and the increased focus on customization of Secretariat floors have resulted in an increase in the estimated costs per floor for the project compared with the corresponding costs presented in the previous business case (ibid., summary). Although the Secretary-General indicates that the actual unit costs related to the first phase of the project are the most relevant comparable costs, and have been used

to estimate the total cost for the project, he also states that the actual unit costs of subsequent phases may be lower owing, inter alia, to potential for economies of scale. The Secretary-General further indicates that the final costs were unknown, as the relevant procurement process was in progress. An updated year-by-year breakdown of the expenditures and estimated total cost in comparison with the estimated project costs, included in the previous report, is provided in table 4 of the Secretary-General's report (ibid., paras. 68-77).

28. The Advisory Committee recalls that the previous proposal of the Secretary-General had involved the conversion of 26 floors of the Secretariat Building and of 8 floors of the FF building to a flexible workplace configuration (see A/69/810, para. 15). The Committee further recalls that in the previous proposal of the Secretary-General, the fit-out costs (per square foot) for the Secretariat Building and the FF building were estimated at $64 and $168, respectively (see A/69/810, annex II). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that in the current proposal of the Secretary-General the fit-out costs (per square foot) for the Secretariat, the FF and the DC-1 buildings were estimated as $122, $50 and $70, respectively. In this connection it was explained to the Committee that providing a flexible workplace in the leased buildings, fully comparable to that planned for the Secretariat Building, would lead to considerably higher fit-out costs for such buildings. Instead, the Secretary-General is proposing a more cost-effective approach, which is to introduce elements of the flexible workplace project in the leased buildings that can deliver most of the benefits to staff members assigned to these building floors. The Advisory Committee was further informed that whereas the estimated fit-out cost for the Secretariat Building is based on past expenditures and contract rates, the estimated costs for reconfiguration works in the FF and DC-1 buildings are based on generic square foot rates.

29. **The Advisory Committee considers that, given the wide variations in the fit-out costs projected for the two buildings between the previous and the current proposals of the Secretary-General, a further review of the methodology and underlying assumptions for estimating such costs is required to arrive at a reliable cost estimate for the entire project. The Advisory Committee expects that updated information in this regard will be provided in the next report of the Secretary-General.**

30. The Secretary-General requests the establishment of two additional General Service (Other level) positions, with effect from 1 April 2016 for the project team, which consists of three temporary positions: a Project Manager at the P-5 level, a Design and Construction Manager at the P-4 level, and an Administrative Assistant at the General Service (Other level) (ibid., paras. 7 and 85). The Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that in 2016, the Flexible Workplace project is proposed to move into the phase-by-phase implementation, which involves a larger volume of work compared with the preparation of the swing space undertaken earlier. In this respect, the Committee was further informed that three facilities management assistants General Service (Other level) would be required until the end of the project and that the Secretary-General is therefore proposing the establishment of two additional General Service (Other level) Facilities Management Assistant positions for the duration of the project. **The Advisory Committee considers that the existing capacity of the project team should be used to continue with the project implementation and recommends against the**

establishment of two General Service (Other level) Facilities Management Assistant positions.

31. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/274 A, requested the Secretary-General to review the costs of implementation of the project, including through reviewing reductions to the maximum extent possible, in the personal information technology package, respecting the replacement cycle of ICT equipment, reusing existing desktop personal computers that have been replaced, reducing new furniture requirements through the reuse of existing furniture and limiting light construction work. In this regard, the Secretary-General indicates that the existing furniture, monitors and large-screen equipment will be reused and opportunities for reusing desktop computers that are being replaced by laptop computers were being explored (ibid., para. 61). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the current proposal of the Secretary-General reflects a reduction in the amount of $57 per staff member in the cost of personal information technology packages when compared with the previous proposal.

32. The Secretary-General further proposes to contain costs related to furniture and minor construction requirements through an integrated and modular design and procurement process that would optimize the results of a competitive solicitation process and minimize the likelihood of change orders and cost escalations (ibid., summary).

33. **The Advisory Committee considers that notwithstanding the proposed reduction in the cost of the personal information technology package, the overall increase of $16.1 million in the estimated project costs presented in the current proposal of the Secretary-General is not in consonance with the request made by the General Assembly, particularly in respect of reviewing the costs of implementation of the project, including through reviewing reductions to the maximum extent possible under specific items. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to revisit his cost estimates for the project's implementation in accordance with the request made by the Assembly and provide updates in this regard in his next progress report.**

Anticipated reduction in long-term commercial rental costs

34. As indicated in paragraphs 17 to 22 above, the revised real estate plans of the Secretary-General, presented in his current proposal, are based on vacating two leased premises, compared with the vacating of three leased premises indicated in his previous business case. The Secretary-General indicates that relinquishing leases on two commercial properties (the Daily News and the Innovation Buildings) would result in reduced rental and operational costs in the amount of $2.2 million in 2017; $5.9 million in 2018; and $12.6 million annually from 2019 onward. According to the Secretary-General, the cost of the project implementation will be offset by the resulting reductions in rental and operational costs by 2023 (ibid., paras. 78-79). The Advisory Committee recalls that in his previous proposal, the Secretary-General had indicated that relinquishing the leases in three commercial properties (the Daily News, the Albano and the UNFCU buildings) would result in the reduction in annual lease rental costs by $18.1 million in 2018 and $19.8 million thereafter. The full cost of the project was anticipated to be offset by the reduction in rent and operational costs by 2020 (A/69/810, para. 11).

35. The Advisory Committee also recalls that at the time of recommending the implementation of a flexible workplace at Headquarters, it had emphasized that the anticipated savings arising from the termination of the leases in the Daily News, Albano and UNFCU Buildings were integral to the business case and that therefore it would be crucial to ensure the timely vacating of the leased office space in the three buildings (see A/69/810, para. 13).

36. **The Advisory Committee notes with concern that when compared with the previous proposal for the application of flexible workplace strategies of the Secretary-General, his current proposal indicates both a longer timeframe for offsetting the cost of project implementation by the anticipated reductions in rental and operational costs and a lower level of reduction in annual rental costs after the project costs have been fully offset (see also paras. 40-41 below).**

Proposed funding

37. The proposals of the Secretary-General related to the funding of the project are included in paragraphs 80 to 82 of his report. As indicated in paragraphs 27 and 28 above, the Secretary-General proposes an amount of $65.7 million as the cost of implementation of flexible workplace at the United Nations Headquarters, out of which expenditures in the amount of $5.2 million was incurred in 2015. For the remaining project duration, from 2016 to 2018, the Secretary-General proposes resources in the amount of $60.5 million.

38. For the implementation of the project during the biennium 2016-2017, the Secretary-General requests commitment authority in the amount of $47.3 million and indicates that the actual expenditures will be reflected in the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium. The Secretary-General further indicates that the second performance report will also reflect the reductions in rental and the related operating costs in the amount of $2.2 million as a result of vacating the Daily News Building at the end of April 2017.

39. In connection with the overall estimated cost of the project, the Advisory Committee requested the estimated cost for phases 1 and 2 of the project. The Committee was informed that based on the overall cost estimate for the reconfiguration of 11 floors of the Secretariat building in 2016, provided in table 4 of the Secretary-General's report, the relevant cost estimate for phases 1 and 2 amounts to $12,440,100.

40. **Taking into account its observations and recommendation in paragraph 11 above, as well as the overall resource requirements estimated by the Secretary-General for the implementation of the project in 2016 the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for an amount not exceeding $18 million for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016.**

41. **The Advisory Committee further recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit, in the context of his next progress report, a detailed proposal for any further resources that may be required beyond 31 December 2016 for the implementation of the project, taking into account the Committee's comments and recommendations in paragraphs 8, 11, 16, 25, 29, 30, 33 and 36 above.**

IV. Other matters

Linkages with other initiatives

42. The Secretary-General indicates that the flexible workplace project is coordinated with both the project to study long-term accommodation needs for Headquarters and the project to study global service delivery model (ibid., paras. 65-66). The Advisory Committee recalls its observation that the adoption by the General Assembly of a new global service delivery model could affect requirements in terms of the number, skills and location of staff. The Committee also recalls its recommendation that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to reflect the expected impact of ongoing management improvement initiatives such as Umoja on space requirements at different Secretariat locations and to ensure that linkages with other ongoing reform initiatives within the Organization, are taken into account in the implementation of a flexible workplace (see A/68/583, para. 8, and A/69/810, para. 28).

Complementarities with flexible working arrangements

43. The Secretary-General indicates the measures taken to seek complementarities with flexible working arrangements in paragraphs 51 to 54 of his report. According to the Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management has authorized extended telecommuting arrangements during the first phase of the project's implementation of the flexible workplace and based on the experience gained, extended arrangements will be considered for subsequent phases of the project. **In view of resolution 69/274 A, in which the General Assembly encouraged the Secretary-General to seek complementarities between flexible workplace strategies and flexible working arrangements, the Advisory Committee considers that such complementarities should be explored further for the maximum benefit of the Organization.**

Flexible workplace strategies in other duty stations

44. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/274 A, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to incorporate flexible workplace strategies in the ongoing design of the strategic heritage plan, as part of the next steps in the implementation of the project, the Secretary-General proposes to continue to work closely with other duty stations, including the United Nations Office at Geneva (ibid., para. 83 (c)). **The Advisory Committee recalls that in the same resolution, the General Assembly endorsed its recommendation to request the Secretary-General to assess the potential for application of flexible workplace strategies in all duty stations across the Organization and to provide this information in his next report on a flexible workplace. The Committee expects that the Secretary-General will provide further information in this regard in his next progress report.**

Possibilities for cost recovery

45. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly in its resolution 69/274 A, requested the Secretary-General to present information on the possibilities for cost recovery, including through the sale of used furniture and ICT equipment. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that as result of

the project implementation, the return of 2,938 desktop personal computers to OICT stock is anticipated. The total value of such computers is estimated at $881,400 (based on an approximate value of $300 per computer). The Committee was further informed that OICT introduced managed output services in 2012 which provide centralized on-demand print, scan, fax and copy services. All machines providing such services will be returned to reconfigured floors after the project's implementation (see also para. 29 above). **The Advisory Committee expects that the cost recovered from the items returned to OICT stock will be accurately accounted for.**

V. Actions requested of the General Assembly

46. **Subject to its observations and recommendations above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Take note of the progress made since the issuance of the last report on the implementation of a flexible workplace at United Nations Headquarters;**

(b) **Authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments not exceeding $18 million in respect of the project costs for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2016;**

(c) **Approve the continuation of three temporary positions (1 P-5, 1 P-4, and 1 General Service (Other level)) for the project team; and not approve two additional General Service (Other level) positions, with effect from 1 April 2016;**

(d) **Request the Secretary-General to submit his next report on flexible workplace strategies at the United Nations at the main part of its seventy-first session, including any further resources that may be required beyond 31 December 2016 for the implementation of the project and the funding modalities.**

Annex

Table 1

Present status of leases of commercial properties at United Nations Headquarters

Leased Properties at United Nations Headquarters	*Lease expiry*	*Option to renew*	*Renewal rights*	*Current annual rent*	*Size (gsf)*	*2015 headcount capacity*
Albano Building	Jan 2018	Yes	2020, 2025, 2035	$10 288 300	187 060	734
Alcoa	July 2015	Yes	2020	$1 573 095	30 845	63
Daily News Building	April 2017	No	No	$2 324 172	31 891	125
FF Building	April 2017	No	2027	$8 512 161	138 381	550
Innovation Bldg.	Sept. 2018	Yes	2023	$7 758 468	127 188	616
UNDC1	March 2018	Yes	2023	$10 074 008	196 566	909
UNDC2	March 2018	Yes	2023	$14 292 531	312 064	1 151
Court Square (UNFCU)	April 2018	Yes	2020, 2022, 2024	$3 400 397	79 079	295
Falchi	Dec. 2024	Yes		$69 318		8
				$58 292 450	**1 103 074**	**4 451**

Table 2

Envisaged status of leases of commercial properties at United Nations Headquarters (should the proposed flexible workplace be implemented)

Leased properties at United Nations Headquarters	*Lease expiry*	*Option to renew*	*Renewal rights*	*Current annual rent*	*Size (gsf)*	*2015 occupancy*
Albano Building	Jan 2018	Yes	2020, 2025, 2035	$10 288 300	187 060	734
Alcoa	July 2015	Yes	2020	–	–	–
Daily News Building	April 2017	No	No	–	–	–
FF Building	April 2017	No	2027	$8 512 161	138 381	550
Innovation Bldg.	Sept. 2018	Yes	2023	–	–	–
UNDC1	March 2018	Yes	2023	$10 074 008	196 566	909
UNDC2	March 2018	Yes	2023	$14 292 531	312 064	1 151
Court Square (UNFCU)	April 2018	Yes	2020, 2022, 2024	$3 400 397	79 079	295
Falchi	Dec. 2024	Yes		$69 318		8
				$46 636 715	**913 150**	**3 647**
			Reduction	**$11 655 735**	**189 924**	**804**

United Nations A/70/7/Add.46

General Assembly

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Seventieth session
Agenda item 134
Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Revised estimates for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic related to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the revised estimates for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic related to the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/70/726 and Corr.1). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information, concluding with written responses received on 22 February 2016.

2. By its resolution 2165 (2014), the Security Council decided to establish (for a period of 180 days) a mechanism to monitor, with the consent of the relevant neighbouring countries of the Syrian Arab Republic, the loading of all humanitarian relief consignments of the United Nations humanitarian agencies and their implementing partners at the relevant United Nations facilities. The mechanism would also monitor any subsequent opening of the consignments by the customs authorities of the relevant neighbouring countries at certain border crossings with Turkey, Jordan and Iraq, with notification to the Syrian authorities, in order to confirm the humanitarian nature of the relief consignments.[1]

3. The Security Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for an initial period of 12 months until 10 January 2016 in its resolution 2191 (2014), followed by a second renewed mandate for a period of 12 months until 10 January 2017 in its resolution 2258 (2015).

4. The proposed revised estimates, issued in relation to resolution 2258 (2015) for the current mandate period of the Monitoring Mechanism (10 January 2016 to

[1] The border crossings with the Syrian Arab Republic are: Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa (border with Turkey), Al-Ramtha (border with Jordan) and Al Yarubiyah (border with Iraq). The Al Yarubiyah border crossing is not monitored presently owing to the security situation in Iraq.

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10 January 2017), amount to $4,323,600 under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, and $341,300 under section 36, Staff assessment. The amount would be charged against the contingency fund for the biennium 2016-2017 (see A/70/726/Corr.1). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with a table comparing the resource requirements under the commitment authority for 2015 ($7.2 million), the expenditures in 2015 ($5.7 million) and the revised estimate for 2016 ($4.3 million) (see annex).

Staffing requirements

5. The proposed staffing complement for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for 2016 would consist of 43 general temporary assistance positions, including 1 D-1, 2 P-5, 4 P-4, 4 P-3, 3 P-2, 5 National Officers, 15 Local level and 9 United Nations Volunteers (see A/70/726, para. 20 and annex I).

6. Compared with the 57 positions that were established in 2015, the staffing complement for 2016 reflects the following net decrease of 14 positions: 16 positions are proposed to be abolished (1 D-1, 1 P-5, 1 P-4, 2 P-3, 3 P-2, 5 Local level and 3 United Nations Volunteers) and 2 positions for National Officers are proposed to be established. It is also proposed that one position of Director of the Monitoring Mechanism be reclassified from D-2 to D-1, and one position of Special Assistant to the Director be reclassified from P-3 to P-2.

7. The amount of $3,127,800 would provide for salaries ($2,110,800), common staff costs ($946,000) and overtime ($71,000) of the 43 positions with a forecasted vacancy rate of 18 per cent. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the forecasted vacancy rate takes into account the proposed reduction in staffing from 57 to 43 positions. The Advisory Committee was also informed that of the 43 positions, the 8 positions for deployment to Iraq (1 Team Leader, P-4; 1 Monitoring Officer, P-3; 2 Monitoring Officers, United Nations Volunteers; 1 Security Officer, National Officer; 1 Administrative Assistant, Local level; and 2 Drivers, Local level) are currently vacant and would remain vacant until the security situation in Iraq improves.

Non-staffing requirements

8. The Advisory Committee was informed that the main non-staffing requirements are:

(a) General operating expenses: the amount of $468,100 would provide for rental of premises for the offices in Turkey, Jordan and Iraq ($263,800), communications, including local and long-distance phone calls and satellite phone subscriptions ($96,000), and other expenses;

(b) Travel of staff: the amount of $299,300 would provide for the travel of staff between the offices in Gaziantep, Turkey, Amman and Dohuq, Iraq, for administrative support during peak periods and meetings as well as for the travel of the Director for meetings in New York, Geneva, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Lebanon ($113,300); and local travel ($186,000) which would cover the daily subsistence allowances of the Monitoring Officers and the Drivers when they travel to the borders for day trips lasting more than 10 hours or for overnight trips;

(c) Grants and contributions: the amount of $149,700 would cover the cost of various services, including for support from the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP) for the recruitment and administration of staff, the issuance of identity cards, requests for visas and vehicle registration and other administrative procedures including residency permits, payroll management and the issuance of contracts ($95,000) and remote mission support provided by the Service for Geospatial Information and Telecommunications Technologies ($41,300). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the budgeted requirements for UNDP services amount to $58,600 in Turkey, $21,600 in Jordan and $14,800 in Iraq, and the requirement under the Service for Geospatial Information and Telecommunications Technologies relates to the support of information technology and communications provided by the Global Service Centre to the three offices of the Monitoring Mechanism in Gaziantep, Amman and Dohuq.

Mandate implementation

9. With regard to the activity of the Monitoring Mechanism, the Advisory Committee was informed that all trucks (6,046 as at 31 January 2016) in the United Nations cross-border consignments were monitored and verified for their humanitarian nature, and that the Monitoring Mechanism has not found any discrepancies between the declared consignments and the contents of the trucks.

10. The Advisory Committee was also further informed that the Monitoring Mechanism has introduced innovative ways to improve and streamline monitoring, including the use of technology and equipment such as tamper-evident labels, security mirrors, seals, ladders, cameras, portable scanners and metal detectors. The Advisory Committee was also informed that, as a result, one monitor is now able to oversee the cross-loading of two or more trucks simultaneously, as opposed to the initial requirement of two monitors per truck. That has enabled the Monitoring Mechanism to effectively monitor a larger number of trucks using a reduced team.

11. On a related matter, the Secretary-General indicates in his report that, owing to the precarious security situation, the Monitoring Mechanism has yet to establish a presence in Iraq and deployment is not envisaged in the immediate future. Should the situation improve, however, the Monitoring Mechanism is ready to deploy quickly (see A/70/726, para. 8). Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Monitoring Mechanism has made contingency arrangements should circumstances change, and has also obtained the consent of the Iraqi authorities for the establishment of a presence, should the need arise. The Monitoring Mechanism has also identified specific staff members and pre-positioned vehicles and other equipment in the event that the Al Yarubiyah crossing is used. However, no staff, equipment or vehicles are presently deployed to Iraq.

12. The Advisory Committee was informed that, on the basis of those arrangements and past experience, the Monitoring Mechanism is confident that the resources proposed for the period of the mandate are sufficient should the number of trucks increase. With regard to, in particular, the downgrading of the Director's position from D-2 to D-1, the Advisory Committee was informed upon enquiry that the tasks of strategic oversight, advocacy and communication that were undertaken by the Director at the D-2 level are now embedded in the mandate of the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator based in Amman.

The use of revised estimates

13. The Advisory Committee notes that the Security Council, in its resolution 2258 (2015), decided to extend the mandate of the Monitoring Mechanism to 10 January 2017. However, the relevant revised estimates were issued on 10 February 2016, one month into the new mandate period. The Advisory Committee has already raised that timeliness issue in a memo to the Secretary-General dated 4 March 2015 and trusts that a comprehensive solution can be found. The Advisory Committee notes, for example, that the mandates of the special political missions have different renewal dates, yet their budgets are presented for a full 12 months on the assumption that they will be renewed by the Security Council.

14. **Considering that the mandate of the Monitoring Mechanism, established in 2014, had already been renewed once, the Advisory Committee is of the view that a second yearly renewal could have been anticipated and that the relevant budget requirements could have been included in the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. The Advisory Committee recalls paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 62/236, in which the Assembly noted with concern the piecemeal approach to the budget process and requested the Secretary-General, for all future proposed programme budgets, to take the necessary steps to avoid such a piecemeal approach to the budget process and ensure the fullest possible picture of the Organization's requirements for future bienniums.**

Conclusion

15. **Subject to its comments above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly:**

(a) **Approve the additional resources in the amount of $4,323,600 (net of staff assessment);**

(b) **Appropriate an amount of $4,323,600 (net of staff assessment) under section 27, Humanitarian assistance, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, to be charged against the contingency fund for the biennium 2016-2017;**

(c) **Appropriate an additional amount of $341,300 under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by an equivalent amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.**

Annex

Summary of resources for the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism, 2015-2016

(United States dollars)

	Commitment authority	*Expenditures*	*Estimated resource requirements*
	10 January to 31 December 2015	*1 January to 31 December 2015*	*1 January 2016 to 10 January 2017*
I. Other staff costs			
General temporary assistance	4 804 900	3 391 009	3 127 800
Subtotal (I)	**4 804 900**	**3 391 009**	**3 127 800**
II. Consultants			
Consultant fees	13 000	41 851	7 900
Consultant travel	10 100	9 964	4 200
Subtotal (II)	**23 100**	**51 815**	**12 100**
III. Travel of staff			
Official travel of staff	187 300	580 308	113 300
Local travel	271 400	31 883	186 000
Subtotal (III)	**458 700**	**612 191**	**299 300**
IV. Hospitality			
Hospitality	6 000	10	4 000
Subtotal (IV)	**6 000**	**10**	**4 000**
V. Contractual services			
External printing	10 000	2 543	4 500
External translation	10 000	252	–
Training	45 900	35 220	45 100
Conferences	4 900		6 300
Other contractual services	12 500	13 314	12 000
Subtotal (V)	**83 300**	**51 328**	**67 900**
VI. General operating expenses			
Rental of premises	447 400	611 399	263 800
Minor alteration to premises	30 000	19 427	7 000
Communications	170 100	117 992	96 000
Maintenance of office equipment	6 000	2 308	3 000
Maintenance of vehicles	53 300	14 945	41 400
Freight and related costs	29 900	56 477	4 300
Local transportation	12 000	20 665	9 600
General insurance	43 600	31 772	43 000
Other miscellaneous services	17 000	2 226	–
Subtotal (VI)	**809 300**	**877 211**	**468 100**

	Commitment authority	*Expenditures*	*Estimated resource requirements*
	10 January to 31 December 2015	*1 January to 31 December 2015*	*1 January 2016 to 10 January 2017*
VII. Supplies and materials			
Stationery and office supplies	30 800	28 737	24 800
Petrol, oil, lubricants	75 100	54 446	62 200
Other supplies	13 800	40 818	15 400
Subtotal (VII)	**119 700**	**124 002**	**102 400**
VIII. Furniture and equipment			
Office furniture and equipment	17 500	113 314	15 300
Information technology equipment	88 800	46 597	10 000
Acquisition of software	8 100	8 667	10 300
Vehicles	239 300	250 931	–
Communications equipment	30 500	21 333	45 400
Security and safety equipment	179 100	25 974	11 300
Other equipment	3 600	41	–
Subtotal (VIII)	**566 900**	**466 856**	**92 300**
IX. Grants and contributions			
Contributions to joint administrative activities	237 600	4 821	54 700
United Nations Development Programme country office cost recovery	85 000	130 281	95 000
Subtotal (IX)	**322 600**	**135 102**	**149 700**
Net requirements	**7 194 500**	**5 709 524**	**4 323 600**